

Message Text

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ACTION SS-30

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O 160400Z SEP 74

FM AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 5601

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BRASILIA 7051

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, OAS, CU, BR

SUBJECT: BRAZIL'S POSITION ON THE CUBA ISSUE IN THE OAS

REF: STATE 202940

SUMMARY

1. THE TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THEE OAS COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY ARE CENTRAL TO THE GOB POSITION AS IT NOW STANDS. FOREIGN MINISTER SILVEIRA DESCRIBED THE PROPOSAL THE GOB HAS JUST ADVANCED ON THE TERMS OF REFERENCE (REFTEL) AS REASONABLE, COHERENT AND UNPROVOCATIVE. IF THE TERMS OF REFERENCE ARE ACCEPTABLE, THE GOB WILL VOTE FOR A COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY AT THE MEETING WHICH BEGINS SEPT. 19. CASTRO'S REACTION AND BEHAVIOR IN THE INTERIM WILL AFFECT HOW BRAZIL VOTES AT THE END OF THE PROCESS WITH RESPECT TO THE SANCTIONS PER SE.

2. SILVEIRA REACTED NEGATIVELY TO THE IDEA OF COMBINING THE FORMAL AND INFORMAL MEETINGS OF FOREIGN MINISTERS AT BUENOS AIRES BUT DID NOT RULE OUT THE POSSIBILITY OF A DELAY IN THE FORMER. HE AGREED THAT IT WOULD BE BEST TO OBTAIN SOMETHING FROM CASTRO IN RETURN FOR LIFTING THE SANCTIONS, BUT THOUGHT "CORRECT BEHAVIOR" THE BEST WE COULD PROBABLY HOPE FOR. THE FOREIGN MINISTER ASKED FOR A STATEMENT OF THE U.S. POSITION AND AGREED TO SEE US EARLY TUESDAY AFTERNOON BEFORE SHLAUDEMAN'S RETURN. ACTION REQUESTED: WE HOPE TO BE ABLE TO RESPOND CONCRETELY

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THEN. END SUMMARY.

3. SHLAUDEMAN AND I MET FOR TWO HOURS THIS AFTERNOON WITH FOREIGN MINISTER SILVEIRA TO REVIEW THIS SUBJECT. FOLLOWING IS GOB POSITION AS SET FORTH BY SILVEIRA:

(A) GOB FOUND TERMS OF REFERENCE IN COSTA RICA/COLOMBIA/VENEZUELA PROPOSAL UNRELATED TO THE ISSUE BEFORE US (CUBA'S BEHAVIOR IN THE HEMISPHERE) AND LIKELY TO SET A BAD PRECEDENT FOR THE RIO TREATY, PARTICULARLY IN THE SWEEPING REFERENCE TO "THE PROFOUND CHANGE IN WORLD POLITICS," WHICH COULD BE USED TO JUSTIFY PRACTICALLY ANY ILLEGALITY, INCLUDING INTERFERENCE IN INTERNAL AFFAIRS.

(B) GOB, FINDING THE USG UNABLE TO COME UP WITH A CONCRETE POSITION, HAS NOW PROPOSED TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY WHICH IT BELIEVES REASONABLE AND WHICH IT IS ACTIVELY ATTEMPTING TO PERSUADE THE OTHER OAS MEMBERS TO ACCEPT. (THE DECISION TO MAKE THIS PROPOSAL WAS TAKEN BY PRESIDENT GEISEL FRIDAY NIGHT, AFTER PASSAGE THROUGH THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL.

(C) IF THIS PROPOSAL OR A SIMILARLY SUITABLE FORMULA IS PUT TO THE MEETING WHICH BEGINS SEPTEMBER 19, BRAZIL WILL VOTE AFFIRMATEVELY. OTHERWISE, BRAZIL WILL ABSTAIN OR VOTE AGAINST. THE POINT HERE IS THAT THE TERMS OF REFERENCE MUST BE RELATED TO THE CUBA ISSUE PER SE AND NOT FOCUSED ON "WORLD CONDITIONS."

(D) BRAZIL CONTINUES TO RESERVE ITS FINAL POSITION ON THE CUBA SANCTIONS PER SE. IF THE TERMS OF REFERENCE MEET THE GOB'S REQUIREMENTS, CASTRO'S REACTION WILL THEN BE OBSERVED. BRAZIL'S VOTE AT THE NOVEMBER MFM--OR WHENEVER THAT MEETING MIGHT TAKE PLACE--WILL BE AFFECTED BY CUBA'S BEHAVIOR IN THE INTERIM AND BY THE REPORT OF THE INQUIRY COMMITTEE.

4. SILVEIRA EXPLAINED THE RATIONALE OF THE BRAZILIAN POSITION AS BEING ONE OF "MAINTAINING THE OAS MACHINERY," AVOIDING CONFRONTATION ON THE ISSUE ITSELF AT THIS TIME, BUT NOT SIMPLY CAVING IN TO THOSE WHO WOULD PLACATE
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CASTRO AT ALL COSTS. (WE GATHERED FROM SILVEIRA'S REMARKS THAT THE GOB'S SPECIFIC INTEREST IS IN TERMS OF REFERENCE THAT WOULD ALLOW IT TO RECORD INSTANCES OF CUBAN INTERVENTION IN BRAZIL, PRESUMABLY IN THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY.) HE WAS OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE REACTION OF OTHER OAS MEMBERS TO THE BRAZILIAN INITIATIVE, AND NOTED PARTICULARLY THAT THE COSTA RICAN FOREIGN OFFICE HAD RECEIVED IT WITHOUT ANY IMMEDIATE

OBJECTION.

5. SILVEIRA ALSO THOUGHT THE CO-SPONSORS WERE IN DANGER OF "MAKING A MESS OF IT" BY MOVING WITHOUT ADEQUATE PREPARATION INTO A SITUATION WHERE A RANGE OF COUNTRIES MIGHT HAVE SECOND THOUGHTS ABOUT GIVING CASTRO TOO MUCH TOO SOON. HE FORESAW THE POSSIBILITY OF EXTENSIVE DEBATE AND NEGOTIATIONS IN THE MEETING BEGINNING SEPTEMBER 19.

6. WE REVIEWED WITH SILVEIRA THE PROS AND CONS OF POST-PONING THE MFM UNTIL JANUARY AND COMBINING IT WITH THE INFORMAL MEETING OF MINISTERS NOW SCHEDULED FOR MARCH IN BUENOS AIRES. HE REACTED NEGATIVELY, NOTING THAT OUR POSITION VIS-A-VIS CASTRO WOULD BE EXTREMELY WEAK IN SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES. HIS THINKING SEEMED TO BE THAT WE WOULD HAVE IN EFFECT COMMITTED OURSELVES TO A FINAL RESULT (LIFTING THE SANCTIONS) WITHOUT GETTING ANYTHING IN RETURN. SILVEIRA WAS ALSO SKEPTICAL THAT THE ARGENTINES WOULD FIND THIS IDEA ATTRACTIVE OR THAT THE OTHER LATINS WOULD TAKE KINDLY TO THE U.S. GETTING OUT IN FRONT IN THIS MANNER. IN FACT, SILVEIRA EXPRESSED THE OPINION THAT, AS THE THREAT OF VIRTUAL WARFARE WITH THE LEFT BECAME MORE PRONOUNCED IN ARGENTINA, THE GOA MIGHT BE BECOMING LESS ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT THE CUBAN QUESTION.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BRASILIA 7051

EXDIS

8. THE FOREIGN MINISTER FULLY UNDERSTOOD AND AGREED WITH OUR VIEW THAT SOMETHING SHOULD BE OBTAINED FROM CASTRO IN RETURN FOR LIFTING THE SACTIONS. HOWEVER,

HE TOOK IT FOR GRANTED THAT THE SANCTIONS ARE COMING TO AN END IN ANY CASE BECAUSE THAT IS WHAT THE OAS MAJORITY WANTS, AND SAW LITTLE PROSPECT FOR ANY MOVE ON CASTRO'S PART IN THE INTERIM BEYOND A DISPLAY OF "CORRECT BEHAVIOR." FOR HIM SUCH BEHAVIOR WOULD CONSIST OF A PASSIVE ATTITUDE WITH RESPECT TO OAS TERMS OF REFERENCE TIED TO NON-INTERVENTION AND A WILLINGNESS TO FOREGO PROPAGANDA ATTACKS ON BRAZIL. HE MUSED THAT PERHAPS SOMETHING COULD BE HAD FROM CASTRO IN THE "SECOND STAGE" CONTEXT OF CUBA'S RE-ENTRY INTO THE INTER-AMERICAN SYSTEM. (HE WAS NOT AS PERSUADED AS WE ARE THAT CASTRO IS FIRMLY AGAINST REJOINING THE OAS.)

9. WITH RESPECT TO THE BILATERAL BRAZIL-CUBA PROBLEM, SILVEIRA SAID HAVANA HAS GIVEN "NUMEROUS" SIGNS OF INTEREST IN THE POSSIBILITY OF BETTER RELATIOS. CASTRO, IN HIS VIEW, ATTACHES PRIMARY IMPORTANCE TO EVENTUAL RAPPROCHEMENT WITH THE UNITED STATES AND BRAZIL--IN THAT ORDER. HE THOUGHT THE BASIC PROBLEM IS BETWEEN THE U.S. AND CUBA, AND THAT IF MOVEMENT WERE TO OCCUR ON THAT FRONT THE GOB WOULD BE INTERESTED IN LOOKING INTO ITS OWN PROSPECTS WITH CUBA. (ON THIS POINT SILVEIRA WAS CAREFUL TO MAKE NO ABSOLUTE LINK--IN FACT HE SPECIFICALLY RULED OUT ANY "AUTOMATIC ALLIANCE"--BUT PROFESSED TO SEE UNSPECIFIED SIGNS OF U.S. "FLEXIBILITY.")
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10. SILVEIRA EMPHASIZE AGAIN HIS DESIRE FOR A CLEAR STATEMENT OF THE U.S. POSITION, EVEN THOUGH IT PROVED CONTRARY TO BRAZIL'S. HE REITERATED THAT BRAZIL HAD ONLY GONE AHEAD WITH ITS PROPOSAL BECAUSE WE SEEMED "INDECISIVE." WHILE MAKING CLEAR THAT HE RECOGNIZED OUR PROBLEMS AND WAS NOT PRESSING FOR ANYTHING FROM US, SILVEIRA LEFT NO DOUBT THAT THE GOB WOULD WELCOME U.S. SUPPORT FOR ITS PROPOSED TERMS OF REFERENCE AND GENERAL LINE OF ACTION. HE AGREED TO SEE US AGAIN IN THE EARLY AFTERNOON TUESDAY BEFORE SHLAUDEMAN'S RETURN TO WASHINGTON. WE SAID WE WOULD REPORT HIS VIEWS AND ASK FOR FURTHER GUIDANCE.

11. COMMENT. THE GOB POSITON SEEMS TO US SUFFICIENTLY REASONABLE AND FLEXIBLE TO DESERVE AT LEAST INITIAL SUPPORT IN PRINCIPLE. THE THRUST OF THAT POSITON SEEMS TO BE THAT BRAZIL DOES NOT WANT TO CONFRONT HER LATIN AMERICAN FRIENDS OVER THE CUBA ISSUE AND MAY BE PREPARED TO ACQUIESCE GRACEFULLY IN LIFTING THE SANCTIONS UNDER THE PROPER TERMS OF REFERENCE. (IT MUST BESTRESSED THAT ONLY GEISEL CAN MAKE THE DECISION ON HOW BRAZIL WILL VOTE AT THE END OF THE PROCESS--AND SILVEIRA MADE CLEAR THAT HE IS NOT PREPARED

TO MAKE THAT DECISION NOW.)

12. ACTION REQUESTED. IF WE ARE TO COORDINATE EFFECTIVELY WITH BRAZIL THE COURSE OF THIS PROCESS WE SHOULD RESPOND TO SILVEIRA TUESDAY WITH AS FRANK AND FORTHCOMING A RESPONSE AS POSSIBLE. IT IS THE RECOMMANDATION FROM HERE THAT THE RESPONSE INCLUDE (A) OUR OWN VIEWS ON THE GOB PROPOSED TERMS OF REFERENCE AND OUR BEST ESTIMATE AS TO HOW IT WILL GO OVER WITH OAS MAJORITY; AND (B) WHAT WE WANT WITH RESPECT TO THE TIMING AND VENUE OF THE MFM AND HOW WE PROPOSE TO PROCEED ON THAT ISSUE.
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